

Appl. No. : 09/903,095
Filed : July 10, 2001

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed September 13, 2002. By this Response, Applicant has canceled originally pending Claims 1-18 and added new Claims 19-30.

By the Office Action, the Examiner indicated the rejection of Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112(2). This rejection has been obviated by the cancellation of Claim 4.

The Examiner indicated the rejection of Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Acres U.S. Patent No. 6,319,125. Applicant asserts that new Claims 19-30 are allowable over the prior art, including Acres '125, for at least the following reasons.

Independent Claim 19

Independent Claim 19 is directed to a method of providing a bonus to entice game play at one or more gaming machines. The method includes the step of displaying bonus event information, via a player tracking device, at a gaming machine which is not being played. Upon a player identifying himself or herself with his or her player tracking card at the gaming machine, bonus award information is configured and transmitted to the gaming machine.

In accordance with this method, a player is eligible for a bonus award without even playing a gaming machine. Further, a casino can utilize this method to entice players to gaming machines which are not currently being played or which have a low play rate. In response to non-play at one or more gaming machines, the bonus event information may be transmitted and sent to those particular machines. The bonus event information identifies to a player that a bonus may be awarded at the particular machine or machines by engaging the machine.

Appl. No. : 09/903,095
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Applicant asserts that the prior art neither teaches or suggests disseminating bonus event information at a gaming machine which is not currently being played and awarding a bonus separate from game play by a player identifying themselves with their player card. ✓

Claims 20-22 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that they depend from independent Claim 19. In addition, these claims are believed to be allowable as they further define a bonus event provided through a player tracking device where a player is awarded a bonus for being the first player to utilize his or her player tracking card at a gaming machine. ✓

Independent Claim 23

Independent Claim 23 is directed to a method of awarding a bonus based upon player loss. In accordance with the method, player loss at a gaming machine is determined by transmitting game play information to a player tracking host. If the game play loss exceeds a predetermined amount, then a bonus event host configures bonus event information and transmits the bonus information to the player via the player tracking device of the gaming machine.

Applicant asserts that the prior art does not teach or suggest awarding a bonus based upon player loss as tracked through a player tracking device, and where the bonus award is issued through the player tracking device.

Claims 24 and 25 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that they depend from allowable independent Claim 23.

Appl. No. : 09/903,095
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Independent Claim 26

Independent Claim 26 is directed to a method by which a bonus is awarded via a player tracking device of a gaming machine. In accordance with the method, player identification information is obtained via the player tracking device. If the player is eligible for a bonus, bonus information is configured and transmitted to the gaming machine which the player is playing. The information is utilized to generate a bonus ticket. The bonus ticket, including information regarding the bonus award, is issued to the player at the gaming machine.

Applicant asserts that the prior art does not teach or suggest issuing a bonus award in ticket form via a player tracking device of a gaming machine, where player eligibility for the bonus is determined by a player's use of the player tracking device.

Claims 27 and 28 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that they depend from allowable independent Claim 26.

Independent Claim 29

Independent Claim 29 is directed to a system in which a bonus is awarded to a player via a player tracking device, but without the identity of the player being known or without his or her use of the player tracking device of the gaming machine.

Applicant asserts that the prior art does not teach or suggest a method of awarding a bonus via a player tracking device independent of the player's use of the player tracking device. For example, Acres '125 provides that for a player to be eligible for a bonus award, eligibility must be verified by the player's tracking card at the card reader of a player tracking device.

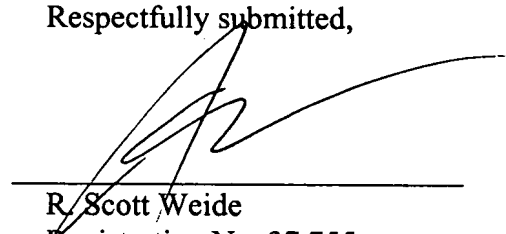
The system as claimed allows a casino to award bonuses to players of gaming machines independent from the outcome of the games being played at those machines. Further, the bonuses can be awarded randomly to all players regardless of whether a player is a member of the casino's player tracking system.

Claim 30 is believed to be allowable for at least the reason that it depends from Claim 29.

Summary

Applicant asserts that Claims 19-30 are in a condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice as to the same. If any matters remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 13, 2002 By: 
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